

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: FRANK M. GARDNER
(Willesden Public Libraries)

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The Library Assistant ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE Inaugural Meeting of the Session will be held at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, W.C., on Wednesday, 10th October, at 6.30 p.m. The speaker will be Miss Helen Simpson, and the title of her address is "Letters of women." Miss Helen Simpson's name will be so well known to our readers that it is hardly necessary for us to express our usual hope that as many people as possibly can will be present.

The following social evenings for the month of October have been arranged:
17th October.—8 p.m. "Library pie." A medley of instrumental, vocal, and histrionic entertainment.

24th October.—7 p.m. Meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch. This is the Inaugural Meeting for this Session of the Branch, and A.A.L. members are, as usual, invited. Miss E. M. Delafield will deliver an address on "A Writer's job."

31st October.—8 p.m. Programme arranged by the staff of the Dagenham Public Libraries.

We are asked by the Secretary of the Library Association to remind students that all entries for the December examinations must be made on the official form, and sent to the office of the Library Association, Chaucer House, Malet Place, London, W.C.1, not later than midday on the 31st October, 1934.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Students are reminded that the last date of entry for the November Correspondence Courses is 20th October, after which date no applications will be considered. These courses finish in time for the December, 1935, examinations. Application forms should be obtained from the Hon. Education Secretary, Mr. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24.

COURSES, SUBJECTS, AND FEES

The Correspondence Courses comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints, and advice on study and practical work, and questions or subjects for essays upon which the Tutor will write comments or corrections.

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The subjects treated, and the respective fees for each section, are as set out below:

Elementary Section.—The course covers the whole of the Library Association requirements for this section. Fee, £1 11s. 6d.

Intermediate Section.—Part 1, Library Classification; Part 2, Library Cataloguing. Total inclusive fee, £2 2s. Either section may, however, be taken separately for a fee of £1 5s.

Final Section.—Part 1, English Literary History. Fee, £1 11s. 6d. Part 2, Bibliography and Book Selection and Historical Bibliography. Fee, £2 2s. Part 3, Advanced Library Administration, including either of the specialized alternatives. Fee, £2 2s.

No courses are being organized for Literary History of Science, Literary History of Economics and Commerce, or Indexing and Abstracting.

Any person not a member of the Library Association may take the above courses, but at double the usual fees.

The date of the next Council meeting will be 14th November, 1934.

Committees of the Council, 1934-5

Finance.—Mr. A. T. Austing (*Chairman*), Miss Jacka, Messrs. Cooper, Jackson, Jones, and Hewitt (*Hon. Secretary*).

Education.—Mr. V. Woods (*Chairman*), Miss Gerard, Messrs. Revie, Sargeant, Seymour Smith, and Martin (*Hon. Secretary*).

Press and Publications.—Mr. W. B. Stevenson (*Chairman*), Miss Rogers, Messrs. Burgess, Munford, Pearson, and Gardner (*Hon. Secretary*).

Programme and Social.—Mr. W. A. Munford (*Chairman*), Miss Exley, Messrs. Martin and Pugley (*Hon. Secretary*).

Forward Policy.—Mr. S. A. Firth (*Chairman*), Messrs. Hopson, Pugsley, Sellick, and Davies (*Hon. Secretary*).

Chairman of Council.—Mr. H. Sargeant.

Selection Panel for "Recommended books."—Messrs. Gardner, Hilton Smith, and Stevenson.

Representatives on Library Association Council and Committees.

Council: The President (Mr. W. E. Hurford) and the Vice-President (Mr. G. Hayward).

Education Committee: Mr. V. Woods.

Publications Committee: The Hon. Editor (Mr. F. M. Gardner).

Membership Committee: Mr. H. Sargeant.

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ON another page we announce the first series of "social evenings" to be held at Chaucer House during the coming winter. The term "social evening" does not perhaps exactly describe what we hope these gatherings will be. It has Victorian implications of unhappy people forcing conventional smiles while surreptitiously glancing at their watches. That is not what we want at Chaucer House. We want, rather, to hold public parties at which people of common interests will meet and talk and be entertained. No physical or mental evening dress. No formality. No introductions. And above all, no polite conversation. The Council of the A.A.L. believe that there are not enough opportunities for London members to meet and exchange ideas and interests. The monthly meetings are necessarily to some extent formal, and the staffs of the London libraries are so scattered that the interesting people at Croydon may never meet the equally interesting people at Hendon.

The Council may be wrong in this belief. If so, these meetings will speedily come to an end, and it will be a long time before they are tried again. We do not ask you to come along to these parties as a duty. We ask you to come because we think you will enjoy a form of entertainment which is not so common nowadays as it should be. And please, when you come, leave your evening dress behind and remember that entertainment is a mutual thing. Like all other things in this world, you get exactly as much as you give.

Lines suitable for a Conference

And ye, red-lipped and smooth-browed; list, Gentlemen;
Much is there waits for you we have missed;
Much lore we leave you worth the knowing,
Much, much has lain outside our ken;
Nay, rush not: time serves: we are going, Gentlemen.

T. HARDY.

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SIMPLIFICATION¹

H. WILSON

THE proposals for simplification as outlined herein are confined to lending library practice, because the lending library, by reason of its popularity, and the diversity of the methods used, offers far more scope for a simplification of method than would be possible in a reference or any special library, and, as a result of the extensive use which is made of it, any benefit derived would be more apparent.

It is known that there are numerous library systems practising economies, that are working efficiently, and fulfilling a service which an increased use of libraries has demanded. But even in these, there is no doubt that a measure of simplification could be introduced. The suggestions, however, are intended mainly for those libraries where lack of funds and inadequate staff are resisting the necessary expansion and modernization of methods consequent on a new appreciation of the public library.

The methods that originated in the old days of the penny rate have to be simplified to cope with post-war public pressure, which has far outstripped the extra provision the majority of library authorities have provided to meet the increased demands on the service.

There is no doubt that the hours worked by the staff in the old days were long when compared with those of post-war times, and the proportionately easier pressure gave room for much elaboration of methods.

Furthermore, during the twenty-five years before the War, when the profession was compiling its manual of library technique, there were many methods fostered which later developments have made redundant. Librarianship is no more, nor less, receptive to new ideas than any other profession, and there is always a large proportion of individuals who are apt to follow slavishly established and traditional methods rather than submit these methods to the test of modern conditions.

Later still, in the past few years, there have been insistent calls for economy in every sphere of life, nor have libraries escaped in this respect. To practise this economy, apart from any reduction of money allotted for library purposes, which does not concern us here, we are confined to adopt a revision of working methods, with a view to saving time, money, or even the energy expended.

¹ A paper read before a meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch, 25th April, 1934; with further suggestions proposed at the meeting.

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Now there is an economy which calls for a strict reduction of necessities, and another which compels an overhaul of the whole system with the idea of cutting out superfluous and redundant processes. With this latter we are concerned, and when the need for rigid economy is no longer evident, still retain our new-found freedom, as the new methods will be found to have become a fundamental part of the service, and contributory agents for the attainment of efficiency.

Probably the most important simplification which has taken place since the War has been the revision of issue methods due to the introduction of open access. The subsequent public response has placed a pressure on our service which makes it imperative that all our lending-library methods should be closely scrutinized with a view to their reduction to absolute essentials. The technique complex, if one might call it that, did tend unquestionably to occupy too large and too disproportionate a part in the professional outlook, and was apt to push the literary and book-knowledge side of our job out of its proper relation. If only to restore it—and it is vitally necessary that it should be restored, and occupy its rightful place in our work—we must examine our system and find some means of producing a more even balance.

Open access demands a much greater knowledge of books and reading guidance than did the old closed system, but there can be but few who would dare to say that the staffs of to-day have better or greater opportunities than their forerunners. Libraries such as Sheffield, and many other places that have felt and experienced the economic depression to the full; where money has been scarce and staffs none too plentiful, have been compelled to go closely into the question of simplification, and to cast overboard every unnecessary administrative detail, without loss of efficiency; indeed, in many cases with increased efficiency in the public service.

In an article like this, a few generalizations would be of little use. Let us therefore examine details of routine, treating of them in their logical order.

I believe that there are yet many libraries which preserve a register of borrowers, in addition to the file of borrowers' forms, in which particulars from the form completed by the borrower are entered. These registers have been known to assume large proportions; some industrious librarians insisting on a record of the age or occupation of the borrower, and even going so far as to record the district or ward in which the borrower resides. Others go even farther than this, and from these particulars compile a summary, usually given

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in the annual report, of the number of readers following a certain trade or profession, arrange the number of readers into groups according to age, or give the number resident in the different parts of the town.

The librarian who practises this may argue that the division into trades of the borrowing public forms a sure basis on which to build his stock, by proving the predominant trades in the district. But the librarian who is really alive to his job should know all this without having to go to the extra trouble and round-about way of finding it out. Other evidences of a more real value will guide the librarian; classes held in technical schools; evening classes, or local societies will all suggest to him that here are persons interested in a subject, and here he ought to concentrate.

Similarly, the ascertaining of the districts which produce the most borrowers is said to guide the establishment of an efficient library service in these areas, but here again, the librarian should aim at no less than an efficient library service for the whole of the district controlled by the library authority, with extra facilities for the more densely populated areas, usually obvious to even a casual observer. As for an age classification, this is merely playing at the game of librarianship.

The first suggestion, then, is the dispensing with the ledger or loose-leaf form of borrowers' register, as the case may be. Let the vouchers themselves be the register. They contain all particulars that are required, and if they are filed at the counter immediate reference is possible, with no loss of time. At the most, the manuscript register is but a copy of the information given on the vouchers, and even when used, invariably results in reference being made to the voucher as a check.

However, a mere file of borrowers' forms would not be enough for us. We require, in addition, some record of new borrowers, how many tickets they take, or how many were issued on a certain day, or during a certain month. This calls for some form of register, but no mention is made in it of the details on the voucher itself.

The ruling of the register is a matter of individual choice, depending on the information required, but in no case need the record of a day's issue of tickets occupy more than one line in the register. The page will be divided into columns; one being used for new borrowers, subdividing again into adult ordinary, adult supplementary, and so on. In a similar way the renewals of tickets may be divided, if the information is required; with further headings for extra ticket facilities given to teachers, students, or subscription members.

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Thus, as each day's tickets are written, they are counted according to headings in the register, and entered in the appropriate column, by number only.

Here then, we have a borrowers' register which has become nothing but a summary of the tickets issued. The register can be made to take one month's record to a page, with the monthly summary at the foot, and yearly summaries will be just as simple.

What saving have we made here? The time taken in listing each day probably as many as 50 to 150 borrowers' names and addresses, or whatever particulars were entered. The number, of course, would depend on the size of the library, or the availability of the tickets for one, two, or three years. Borrowers' registers will be smaller, and will last about thirty times longer than the usual one. In fact, it is doubtful if more than one would ever be used.

Other details of registration, such as centralization of forms, and the use of catchwords on the form as an aid to filing, have recently been discussed, so I will not cover them here.

The next process to be examined is overdues routine. The amounts charged for penalizing borrowers vary considerably from library to library. In some libraries a charge of a penny a week or part of a week is made for the period overdue, in others it may be twopence, whilst some charge nothing at all.

But whatever charge is made, there must be regular application for the return of overdue books. And these applications are made at most libraries at the end of the second week overdue period.

The considerable increase in the use of libraries has resulted in a consequent increase in the number of books overdue, and the sending of applications to erring readers has developed from a small operation to one of some magnitude. At Leyton, where the effects of this increased use were felt considerably, calling for an apportionment of time which could be ill spared, it became necessary to investigate, and determine some means of reducing the task to its proper proportions.

It had been the practice for many years to send the "First Overdue" notice when a fine of 3d. had accumulated, *i.e.* when the book was in the second week overdue. The fines levied are 1d. for the first week or part of a week, and 2d. for each subsequent week or part.

During the full year prior to the investigation it was found that 12,800 first applications were made to readers for the return of books, and it was estimated that 5,500 second applications were sent out; added to these were many special letters.

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There is no doubt that a number of the readers had come to regard the sending of a first notice during the 3d. fine period as an obligatory service on the part of the department. There is no such obligation on the library to send out notices to readers warning them that their books are overdue; the primary purpose of sending notices is *not* that of jogging faulty memories or reminding careless readers, but to secure the return of books which are being retained unduly and so retarding the circulation.

During a five weeks period, an experiment was carried out to see (1) if it was necessary to send out so many first applications; (2) if the number could be lessened and any considerable time, labour, etc., saved on this particular administrative operation, and (3) how many readers would return the books without a notice if a little longer time was given before the notice was sent.

The first notices were not sent therefore until a 5d. fine had accumulated, *i.e.* a week later than usual, and when the book was in the third week overdue. The result was surprising. Instead of sending out 814 first applications it was found necessary to send only 373, 441 books being returned without application to the borrowers, without causing these members any irritation from receipt of the application, and with no expense to the department in any way.

As a result, therefore, it has been decided not to send first applications from the library until a 5d. fine has accumulated. It will be interesting to see if withholding the notice for a further week, *i.e.* until the book has been in the hands of the borrower a full five weeks, will result in a further 54 per cent. decrease.

Whatever practice may be prevalent in other libraries these are figures from an actual working of the experiment, and the potential saving to the library in time, labour, and stationery was considerable; staff being released for more important work, and placing the operation of overdues nearer its true position in the scale of administrative values.

In addition, and to further reduce the time allotted to overdues, the practice of entering each overdue notice into the record book was discontinued, one entry sufficing for each batch of first applications, and so on.

In dealing with these records of issue it would not be out of place to mention a method of book renewal. That is, in the case where a borrower wishes to renew a book by producing the number and the date of issue or date due. Although a minor point, it will be found to have its effect at busy periods at the discharging desk.

The usual method of renewing a book is as follows. The book card with

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the borrower's ticket is taken from the tray and placed in the one for the day's issue, and at the same time a card is placed in the former date due, containing all particulars, and referring to the date in which the actual charge will be found.

Consequently, when the book is returned, reference is made to the date stamped in the book, when the card there directs us to the date where we will find the charge. Where renewals in this way are carried out, there is likely to be much time lost in discharging such books.

There is a simple method which enables such renewals to be made, resulting in but one reference to the issue trays when the book is returned. When the book number and date are given at the time of renewal, the charge is found, and particulars of the borrower and date of renewal entered on the book card, with the initial of the person renewing. A narrow piece of card, measuring probably 2×1 inch, is placed in the charge. The top of this card is printed with the word "Renewed," and below this the date due after renewal is stamped. The charge is then put back in the date it was taken from, the issue being recorded on an issue sheet. A record of books renewed with the name of the borrower can be preserved, and filed in case any query arises, the borrower completing a form for this purpose, which gives the book number, borrower's surname, date due, and date of renewal. Space may be left for the staff to initial the form, and add the new date due, marking whether the borrower called or 'phoned. In the latter case, the form would be filled in by the assistant taking the renewal. It may be argued that the filling in of such a form is of little use, but it is found that when a query arises, the production of such form quells all argument, which would otherwise reflect on the library in some way, especially when the argument takes place before a number of other borrowers.

When overdues are written for, books that have been renewed are taken out and filed in one numerical sequence behind a guide card marked "Renewals," in a similar way to the overdues. This section would be checked regularly to see that no overdue books are overlooked. It would, in fact, be done at the same time as overdues.

On the return of a book renewed in this way, the charge will be found under the date stamped in the book; all that requires to be done is to glance at the date stamped on the renewal slip to see that no fine has been incurred since the date of renewal.

As for the actual methods of issuing books, I do not think there is much

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need for simplification here. The general principles are very much the same in all open-access libraries, and appear to meet all demands made upon this method. There are, though, others who believe that there is room for improvement, and, as Mr. Gardner has suggested, there is a method. This is a novel way of issuing books, and to the best of my knowledge I will describe it. Each borrower has a ticket which he retains at all times, merely producing it when entering the library or taking out a book. In addition to the name and address, this ticket bears an alphabetical combination of three letters, which combination is carried on to the borrowers' form in addition, and by which this is filed. When a book is issued to the borrower, the three letters are added to the book card, and this card is the only record of the issue that is retained. The member's card is only produced to show that he is qualified to borrow books.

On returning the book, the borrower shows his ticket, and hands in his book. The assistant taking the book checks the date due, and charges any fines that may have been incurred, but the book is not discharged at this time. The borrower passes through, and the book is placed on one side, transferred with others to a discharging room, where a staff is employed in taking out the book cards, and re-issuing the books for circulation.

In the event of a book becoming overdue, the key letters are looked for on the book card, and the borrower's name and address are obtained from the index of borrowers.

This method presupposes ample staff, and there is a tendency for the books to be delayed in their journey back to the shelves. Also, there is no genuine simplification of work, unless machines are used for charging. The discharging process is merely transferred to another department, but prevents delay for readers at the busiest times, ensuring a steady movement into the library. This freeing of the counter from the discharging process would in itself justify the adoption of such a method.

With regard to accessioning, withdrawing, and replacement of books, I think that here we might combine the whole and dispense with registers for each. It would be an easy matter to use the stock cards as an accession register, filing such cards under their consecutive accession numbers instead of the classification number. As new books are accessioned, the cards for these are kept on one side until a summary of the additions is made, when they are entered on a specially ruled sheet, in bulk. They then take their place in numerical order with the other cards.

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When books are withdrawn, the cards are taken out and dated accordingly, and filed in a separate sequence, this time under the author and title; and record sheets are made as required.

The replacement of a title would be entered on the back of the same stock card, with further particulars of the cost or any other particular.

Stocktaking would be carried out by checking the accession numbers, and, of course, the books would not be arranged in the same order as the stock cards, but it is doubtful whether much time would be lost by checking in this way. In any case, the saving of time by not entering books in the register (in addition to writing out a stock card) would allow an appreciable margin.

I may add, though, that such a method as the one described would only work in a library where a classified catalogue is used. The arrangement of the stock cards in order of accession numbers would render the stock book almost useless from the point of view of the library staff, if no classified catalogue was in use.

Approaching the subject of classification and cataloguing, we find there are peculiar differences. In the case of classification, which calls for as much simplification and modification as anything else, especially in the case of the Dewey Scheme, simplification would not be greatly apparent to the staff, nor reduce to any extent the time spent in classifying. Rather would the borrowers themselves feel the benefit in a simpler arrangement of the books on the shelves. Cataloguing reform, however, would affect the staff directly and the borrowing public to a much lesser extent.

Therefore, in the case of classification, and for the reason mentioned above, it would be useless to delve deeply into the matter. A full treatment—and to cover the subject satisfactorily a full treatment would be necessary—is not within the scope of this paper.

In considering cataloguing processes, I find that they present a unique opportunity for simplification, and by reason of the amount of time which is taken up by cataloguing, leave us with an appreciable amount of time saved.

A very thorough treatment of such methods as applied to cataloguing was given in the February number of *THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT* by Mr. Cranshaw under the title of "Economies in cataloguing methods," and some refreshing economies were proposed, of which a number were altogether feasible and desirable.

Based as it is on a questionnaire sent to eighty-two large municipal libraries, the proposals set forth are made with an extensive idea of the state of cataloguing processes throughout the country, and any suggestions are made as a

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result of the realization that too much time and energy is wasted through the cataloguing methods used in the average public library.

Until we find cataloguing definitely regulated from a central bureau, each library must do its best, and if it has not the time to spend in cataloguing a book in detail, or a full entry is thought unnecessary, simplify its methods without reducing their value, and employ the time more usefully.

The abolition of the fiction catalogue, which on the face of it may appear rather a drastic step, is indeed a venture in the right direction. The fact that a library has always provided a fiction catalogue does not imply that one will always be required. On examination of the proposal, one can find that much is to be said in support of it, with little against; although a diversity of opinion is bound to arise.

As we consider the junior library, the argument against the fiction catalogue becomes stronger. As, you know, the range of titles suitable for inclusion in a junior library is limited, and it is found that to provide a satisfactory and adequate stock many titles are duplicated and triplicated. Here, then, in the junior library, we have all titles, or very nearly so, so why have a catalogue?

The non-fiction catalogue in the junior library introduces a different argument, and I do not think we could dispense with it. Simplify it, by all means, making entries as brief as possible; but here I believe that the non-fiction catalogue is quite as essential as in the adult library. The size of the catalogue could never assume large proportions; a few drawers in a cabinet at the most, easily managed and kept up-to-date. Furthermore, the catalogue will be required for the benefit of the children themselves. It is now customary to acquaint children, by means of talks, with the use of various guides in the library, and impress on them the easiest way to find books; both whilst they remain members of the junior library and for when they use the adult library. In all these the use of the catalogue plays an important part, and for this reason alone, a retention of the non-fiction catalogue would be advantageous.

The proposal to abandon the slip method of cataloguing as a preliminary to writing the catalogue cards will meet with approval; but it is surprising to find that the practice is so prevalent in municipal libraries. Where bulletins are prepared, it has been found speedier to type printers' "copy" direct from the cards, with much more satisfactory results. The cards could be filed in the usual way in a card cabinet, being much easier to handle, and less likely to be lost.

Having dealt with the more important proposals, we have the question left

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of how much information are we to put on the card itself? This, also, is a means of reducing still further the time spent in cataloguing, and the typing of, if not useless, at least unnecessary, information. Only in reference libraries, or perhaps the largest lending libraries, is a detailed bibliographical description required. The staff themselves only require certain items of information.

The author's name is likely to assume large proportions if a full entry is made, and yet we should strive for a consistent form of heading for all names. Generally speaking, in giving names of authors, the first forename in full will suffice, with any others initialled. Where the first one is given only as an initial, find it and use it throughout.

The title should contain only the essential information for finding what the book is about, and its method of treatment; much superfluous information, such as sub-titles, which in many cases are but a repetition of the title in a slightly different form, could be omitted.

Imprint could be ignored entirely, except for the date, as this latter is important, and should be retained in all entries.

With regard to the collation, the number of volumes, if more than one could be added, and for the rest, illustrations and maps are all that require mention.

Having dealt with some of the more important processes and their simplification, it would be wise to see where this valuable time we have saved is to be utilized. Each library has its own peculiar problems and extra work, but there are some which, I might mention, could be adopted in most libraries; and in passing I would suggest specialized selection of books by members of the staff, and the personal service to readers by forwarding them a list of books on subjects in which they are interested, or lists of recent additions. The proper display of books, too, calls for more time than is imagined, and this side is likely to be neglected.

These suggestions for simplification given above are merely tentative, and in their scope they are limited. What is required is a bureau on the same lines as the Central Cataloguing Bureau, where all proposals for a simplification of any process of library routine, whether for the lending library or anything else, are sent and re-issued by them for the edification of other librarians. Such a bureau would find out the methods in use in all libraries (methods which many librarians are unwilling to speak of), compare them, and arrive at a decision in favour of the most useful ideas, using them as a basis for standardizing the routine methods throughout the country.

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Finally, and before I conclude, I should like to make some reference to the aim of librarianship.

It is evident that there has been a decided tendency since the War to increase extension work in many directions, and it would be hard in some cases to say whether the librarian was running a library or a sort of polytechnic. When all is said and done, the origin of these extra activities was the intention of creating and attracting new readers to the library service.

It would be wise to enquire if there are not other methods at the disposal of librarians more in keeping with their job of attracting readers, and yet, have we not now reached the position, not of attracting readers—and unquestionably a good book is the best attraction—but of a thoughtful exploitation of that book stock?

In conclusion, I wish again to stress the fact that we have been too long under the influence of custom and tradition, which have hampered our methods, and we must arrive at a time when a sweeping decision will have to be made. At one time the idea of allowing borrowers to choose their own books was regarded with amazement, but surely enough, the greatest simplification libraries have introduced is now almost universal in its use; and so may some of the proposals given here find their way into everyday practice, and pave the way for the evolution of a library service where routine methods are a secondary consideration, and the real work of librarianship is provided.

CATERING FOR THE ADOLESCENT *(continued)*

SIDNEY W. ANDERSON

THE Brownsville Children's Branch of the Brooklyn, New York, Public Library founded an Intermediate Department in 1929, "owing to congestion of numbers and needs in the Adult and Junior Libraries." Two club-rooms on the second floor of the children's branch were converted to serve the new need, the larger one becoming the main circulation room and the smaller a reference room. This reference room was also designed to accommodate the lending non-fiction stock, evidently much less used than the novels. From the beginning the library has specialized in beautiful editions, using one for display and duplicates for circulation. The Jewish tenement children, who form a large percentage of the local population, are quick to respond to the

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æsthetic appeal of an attractively-produced book, and the experiment has met with considerable success. The main book-stock on the fiction shelves consists of what are known as "near-classics" of several years' popularity and standard reading presented by the high-school English department, a typical example of co-operation between the library and the education authority. A remarkable diversity of tastes is displayed by the young readers, many of whom start with writers like Leacock, Twain, and Wodehouse, advancing in due course to Conrad, O. Henry, Will James, Tchekov, and Turgenev. I learnt that there is no demand for Dickens and Scott except in attractive editions. The non-fiction stock is kept scrupulously up to date, although no book of any kind is ordered unless there is already a copy in the Brooklyn Public Library, a rule for which I fail to see an adequate reason. A monthly running-fund is provided for non-fiction duplicates, replacements, and additions. Each suggested title is read by three members of the Intermediate staff under the leadership of the branch librarian, who gives the final approval. It has been thoroughly realized at this library that a flexible book-list with no dead stock is essential for successful results.

Other libraries in the U.S.A. which have separate rooms for Intermediate readers are the Cleveland Heights Public Library, Ohio, and the Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois. The Miss Susan Wilcox Room in the latter was organized to care for both the recreational and reference needs of the young people. A lack of school libraries in Springfield made it especially necessary for the library to provide this service.

At Los Angeles there is no separate room, but "work with teen-age students at the Central library is done in this department with a librarian in charge of the special work" (note the word "students"—an ominous sign of the formal and restricted atmosphere in which the young American reader moves at the library). This librarian is also chairman of the *Librarians in charge of work with young people*, an organization which meets in the central building four times a year. This organization is composed of a representative from each department in the main library, and a librarian from each of the forty-nine branches whose special interest is in the high-school boy or girl. At each meeting, adult books suitable for adolescents are reviewed, various problems of work with Intermediates are discussed, lists of books for special needs are made, and outside speakers, who work with boys and girls of this particular age, talk on some phase of work with young people. The principal work of the committee is to select books (both fiction and non-fiction) suitable

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for young people of 14-16 years of age who are leaving the Junior library and making use of the adult collection for the first time. The titles chosen are annotated, multigraphed on catalogue cards, and sent to all of the branch libraries. The books are marked with a Green Diamond to distinguish them from the adult stock, with which they are shelved.

In the course of a very helpful letter Miss Emily W. Kemp, who is in charge, told me: "The books in the Green Diamond collection are not standards, but they are entertaining and well written, and constructive to the adolescent mind, containing that which will broaden sympathy, quicken the imagination, and impel to action. The object in choosing these books is to guide the young people on their own ground; for those who have read little, it provides encouragement and stepping-stones to good taste. For those who have read widely, it suggests still other titles of high standard and the best of the new books as they are published." These people have high ideals indeed, and seemingly the enthusiasm without which mere money is useless. As a matter of interest I give examples of one or two titles and annotations from special (printed) lists issued by this organization:

Adams

Mountains are free

Scintillating glamour of an Austrian court, and the struggles of the Swiss people to be free as the mountains.

King, Basil

Conquest of fear

To help you resist that "inferiority" feeling.

Starrett, Helen

Charm of fine manners

A little old-fashioned book that can help new-fashioned young people.

Byrd, Commander R. E.

Skyward

Byrd became an explorer and an aviator by accident, but his success was far from being accidental.

Hindus, Maurice

Humanity uprooted

"To read this book is to take the first step in a liberal education," John Dewey said.

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Van Loon, H. W.

Story of mankind

History told with a "punch" and with numerous clever drawings by a rollicking Dutch professor.

The work with Intermediates at Los Angeles began in 1926, when the Adult Education Department was established. They commenced with booklists, then came work with the Senior High Schools, giving book-talks on such subjects as "Modern heroes," "Travel in an easy chair," etc. The inevitable book-clubs were formed, and the work developed until it attained its present importance. The lists are more attractive than anything of a similar kind that I have seen in this country. Incidentally, an analysis of reading tastes here shows that the young man of Los Angeles prefers to read about science, while his female counterpart dabbles in literature. Modern plays and biographies are in much greater demand than Shakespeare and the older writers.

Before leaving America we must take a fleeting glance at two places where work with Intermediates has been undertaken comparatively recently. The Evanston Public Library, in Illinois, has a High School Department under the direction of a librarian who has a desk at the entrance to the adult stacks. Direction of adolescents in use of stacks, reference books, and recreational reading is carried out. The East Cleveland, Ohio, Public Library (not to be confused with Cleveland Heights) engages in "specialized work with young people" under the direction of Mrs. M. H. Willert, whose article I mentioned above. Her theory is that young people prefer not to have a division between Adult and Intermediate books, on the grounds that this savours of supervision and restriction. So they use the Adult stock, but have the help of a special Young People's Librarian, who preserves in her desk files of helpful annotations on suitable books. No statistics are kept of this work.

One other library on the far side of the Atlantic merits our attention. Mr. C. R. Sanderson, Deputy-Chief Librarian of Toronto Public Library, explains that much valuable work with Intermediates forms part of the ordinary routine of the library. The first hint of special consideration to the reading needs of teen-age boys and girls appeared in the *Annual report for 1930*. Here it is stated that "experience has taught us however efficient and effective the work with these youngsters may be on its 'informative' side the library contact is impermanent, and there is a considerable leakage of borrowers when the youngsters leave high school. Many of them have come to regard the library

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as an adjunct of the school, necessary while the demands of the school are to be met, but something which can be shed when the school is shed." The report goes on to say that matters have been made more difficult by the "dry" classics which the high schools have prescribed for set reading. As a result of discussions many schools eventually agreed to accept and recommend lists of rather more interesting books prepared by intermediate librarians. These lists were drawn up, not with the idea of containing "books which ought to be read as a duty," but "books which the youngster will enjoy, and which are worthwhile." In the 1931 report matters had progressed still further, a more definite separation of the informative from the recreational side being recorded. This was done by transferring all the reference and study books to a separate room—the Hallam Room, leaving the original Kipling Room free to supply "reading for reading's sake." One librarian in each of the branch libraries at Toronto specializes in Intermediate work, and a consolidated list of Intermediate books is being prepared, which they hope to print when completed. The lists sent to me were mimeographed (Canada's financial resources are not so great as those of America), but the standard attained was high.

It will be noted that the educational conditions are rather different in the U.S.A. and Canada from those prevailing over here. Most of the libraries undertaking Intermediate work do so in co-operation with the high schools, the bond being much stronger than that between libraries and secondary schools and polytechnics in this country. Whether or not this is an advantage is debatable, much depending on local conditions and personnel, but results are evidently being achieved, or the work would not be pursued with such earnestness.

After this, it seemed rather surprising when Mr. Welsford was unable to trace any library in this country (except Walthamstow) which considered Intermediate work worthy of special mention. He told me that Mr. Nowell was rather interested, and I eventually secured a copy of the *Coventry 1929 report*, giving details of the Intermediate collection formed there. Details of this will be given in the next article.

(To be concluded.)

The Library Assistant SUMMER SCHOOL, 1934

BIRMINGHAM greeted us with a gale—a gale which I feel must have subtly insinuated a portion of itself into our programme of activities.

After several days of the comparative quietude of my daily life, I still have a vague feeling that I must hurry or everyone will be kept waiting. How we were able to have lunch and turn ourselves out, neat and trim, for an afternoon's visit in rather less than half an hour is now completely beyond my comprehension.

But at Chancellor's Hall all things are possible. It has a corner of its own in the heart of Time, and is privileged to have one hundred and twenty seconds to every minute, otherwise how is it possible to explain the amount of work and amusement achieved in a fortnight at the Summer School?—work and amusement that made us so happy that we should not have complained had the gale blown even a little stronger. I will not say that there were not moments of disappointment, there were; Stratford in the rain is not Stratford in the sunshine, and the exterior of the Memorial Theatre is depressing in either, but as always, disappointments were outweighed by pleasant surprises. A garden which, we were told, produced little besides lilies of the valley, for our especial benefit blossomed forth into delicious tea, with even more delicious sandwiches and what-nots; green lawns snug and secluded, and a palm tree. Chipping Camden, that mellow village of the Cotswolds, so retiring that the driver of our coach very nearly couldn't find it and performed marvellous "autogymnastics" on a twisty ten-foot bridge after taking the wrong turning. At Chipping Camden we visited a most exclusive exhibition of Cotswold arts and crafts, where one small wooden rabbit was priced £10. At Chipping Camden we discovered the extreme partiality for scones of one of our number, and at Chipping Camden we did not climb the hill.

The tennis courts were splendid, but as you may have gathered, opportunities for playing on them with a clear conscience were few and far between. Those who derived the greatest benefit from them were a few Spartan spirits who, by some peculiar mental mechanism, managed to awaken early and took to the courts before breakfast. I could not but envy them, but emulation was an impossibility. Oh! I mustn't forget to mention the fives court. We are still waiting for someone who knows how to play.

But enough—those of you who may perchance read this will think that all the bustle and haste was in the cause of amusement. Not so. A quarter-past nine saw us, breakfasted and alert, imbibing library ideals and technique,

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municipal, university, and county, everything from the broader issues confronting the national library system as a whole, to paragraph one of section three of the Public Libraries Act, 1919. After strenuous mornings of lectures—and believe me the lectures were far too stimulating not to be strenuous—and afternoons spent visiting branch libraries and the Kynoch Press, we set out after dinner for the Birmingham Central Libraries. I think the best of us might have flagged a little had it not been whispered that sustenance awaited us at ten o'clock. I shall be eternally grateful to the Birmingham Library Staff for those thoughtful cups of tea.

In fact, we have much for which to thank the Birmingham Library Staff. The very first evening, despite the vagaries of a rather too genteel radiogram, they managed to break the ice, and the slick flow of events throughout the whole course showed how much time and care had been spent in its preparation. That they should, on our last morning, see each one of us individually into his, or her, appointed train, with cheering handshakes and farewells, was only a final expression of the true kindness with which we had been received throughout our stay.

I need hardly say that I turned my back on Birmingham with regret.

STELLA CAUSEY.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE HON. EDITOR,

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

7th September, 1934.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

Mr. Callander's article entitled "Valuations" published in the September issue of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT is a joy to read. May he write many more like it! But when he apparently in sincerity (or is he speaking sarcastically?) awards the laurels to a Library Bulletin that does not contain a list of books added to the library, surely he praises that which has missed the object of its existence. Mr. Callander's approval caused me to echo the celebrated American pussy's ejaculation. According to Mr. Callander, the fact of its difference from other bulletins in that it does not contain a list of books is praiseworthy. Is, then, a Library Bulletin to be a tenth-rate combination of *John o' London's Weekly* and the parish magazine? Or is it intended to give to library borrowers an idea of the books recently added to the library?

I merely ask (being for the present),

ROSA DARTLE.

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THE HON. EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, NOTTINGHAM.
September 15th, 1934.

SIR,—

Judging from his article on "Catering for the adolescent," Mr. Sidney Anderson does not appear to be aware that other libraries in this country, in addition to Walthamstow, have attempted to cope with the problem.

As long ago as 1923, when the Northern Branch of the Nottingham Public Libraries (the first new branch erected since the War) was opened, the late Mr. Walter Briscoe set aside a section of the lending library for "intermediate" books. The same policy was followed in each of the four branches built after this, and in the new Central Lending Library, when the existing building was extended in 1932.

The fact that this is not entirely a separate department has proved to have more advantages than disadvantages. For one thing, the need for duplication (or even triplication) of stock is naturally lessened. Mr. Briscoe realized that, as Mr. Anderson says, borrowers who have just outgrown the junior library may be at sea in the adult department. But, with his keen insight into juvenile psychology, Mr. Briscoe also knew that most boys and girls who have just left school and started work resent any suggestion that they are not "grown up." Under the Nottingham plan, these borrowers have all the prestige of belonging to the adult library, but, if bewildered, are sure of a corner in which they can find the books that appeal to them. Moreover, the danger of restricting the range of their reading is also obviated, as, by seeing other books on the surrounding shelves, they gradually become emboldened to try them, without having to face the ordeal of joining yet another department.

Yours faithfully,

S. J. KIRK,
Deputy City Librarian.

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